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SERMON BY THE REV. THOMAS PYNE, A. M.
SERMON BY THE REV. HARRY CROSWELL.

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RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE MERCIES:

A Sermon,

Preached on Thursday, the 13th of December, 1832: being the day appointed by the Governor of the State of New-York, to be observed therein as a day of public Thanksgiving to ALMIGHTY GOD for having removed the recent epidemic pestilence, and for the other blessings of his merciful providence; in St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn,

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Psalm lxv. 1—"*Praise waiteth for thee, O* GOD, *in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*"

IT has pleased GOD, in making known his will to us, not to propound it in the way of dry argumentation, but to take advantage of circumstances and occasions as they have arisen: thus instructing us in a method by far the most impressive and interesting to a creature formed as man is, and making the plans of his providence subservient to the purposes of his grace.

This is exemplified in the psalm before us. The Israelites were commanded, during the continuance of the Jewish polity, to appear before the LORD at Jerusalem thrice in every year. At these divinely-appointed festivals, therefore, they left their respective villages, and, giving up for a time their worldly employments, went in companies to the holy city. In order to relieve the tedium of the way, to prepare their minds for the solemn duties in which they were to be engaged, and to make the journey itself a blessing, it was highly important that suitable services should be prepared. The HOLY SPIRIT condescended to their aid; he lighted up the sweet Psalmist of Israel with the fire of divine poetry; and the sacred ode from which the text is taken, is one, among several, which was sung in

chorus, as the favored people proceeded toward Zion, — the perfection of beauty, — and thought of the Church of which she was a figure.

I can hardly conceive any thing more affecting than the use of such language as that of our psalm under such circumstances; the villages of Palestine left unprotected, (save by JEHOVAH'S promised care,) while the people went to the metropolis to serve him; the waving harvests and the romantic scenery around them — the holy city, with all its temporal magnificence and all its elevating associations, in the distance. Surely we may well exclaim, "Happy were ye, O children of Israel, a people near unto JEHOVAH." "Blessed, O LORD, is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

And may we not, brethren, trace some analogy between the circumstances under which the psalm was composed, and those for which we are now convened? As our Easter and Pentecost seem respectively correspondent to the Passover and the Feast of Weeks, so may the present occasion be thought not unlike that of Tabernacles; a festival which occurred in autumn after the ingathering of the vintage, at which the Jews expressed their gratitude to GOD for the mercies of the year, and illuminated their houses as a type of spiritual light and joy. You are not, indeed, as they were, beneath the burden of ceremonies; you are not compelled to distant pilgrimages, or a prolonged abstraction of your time from the needful concerns of life. "The liberty wherewith CHRIST maketh his people free" is your privilege; but are you not hence called, if possible, to a deeper expression of thankfulness for abounding blessings? Should you not add your voice to the people of old, in saying, "Praise waiteth for thee, O GOD, in Zion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed!"

Two commanding points are suggested by the text.

I. A recognition of the divine mercies.

II. The effect this recognition should have on our minds.

I. We are invited to a recognition of the divine mercies.

When recalling our thoughts from the things of the world, which so constantly attract our attention and so greatly deceive our hearts, we endeavor to reflect on the mercies of GOD, we know not where to begin, nor where to end! If we turn our eyes to the countless worlds which the night reveals to us, or think of the myriads of creatures who every moment depend on the hand of GOD, well may we exclaim with the astonished and enraptured Psalmist, even in reference to the *whole* human race, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him!" (Ps. viii. 4.) Yes, brethren, we shall not deem amiss, when, contemplating the majesty of Him in whom it is a condescension to "behold the things which are in heaven and in the earth," we suppose that the constant worship before the throne had not been interrupted, nor the glory of JEHOVAH'S diadem been dimmed, had man never been created, or, being created, had, like the ephemera, flitted through his short summer day of life, and lain down in oblivion! If, then, millions upon millions of their successive generations have been so insignificant before the ALMIGHTY; — if even man the righteous, man the unfallen, be of so little importance amidst the excellencies of an adoring universe; — what shall we say of GOD'S compassion to man the sinner, man the perverse, the rebel, the ingrate? — what, turning away our thoughts from the mass to the individual; from mankind as stretched over their many countries, and divided by their many customs, to *ourselves*, as single pebbles, as it were, upon the vast line of shore? Do we wonder at a prophet's exclamation while dwelling upon this precise point, "Oh how precious are thy thoughts to me-ward, how great is the sum of them!" Must we not enter into the burst of rapture of an apostle, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!"

Brethren, behold the majesty and love of the ALMIGHTY. The glorious sun lights up the world; a thousand rivers feel his sway, a thousand valleys own his influence; birds of every wing, beasts of differing form and habit; insects, from the dull drone to the beautiful king-fly, rejoice in his beams. He shines

perfectly for *all*, nor less perfectly for the minutest particle of inert matter: — so is it with our God; his glory covers the heavens; the earth is full of his praise. Ten thousand times ten thousand ministering spirits breathe the atmosphere of his love, or repose beneath the shade of his power; but, with all this circle of dependants, he looks in tenderness and care upon the lowliest child of Adam; yes, he shines as perfectly *for him*, as if there were no other creature in heaven or in earth! Oh, most amazing power of our God! How it baffles our thoughts! how it teaches us our littleness! how would it burden our mind were it not that the whole is a mystery of grace!

To touch, in a few words, on some particulars. Do we consider (that which is, indeed, too often treated as a light thing by the ungodly) our creation? How great the power and goodness of God here displayed! We are, because God hath so willed. The very notion of creation implies extrinsic agency. We could no more have formed our bodies or given to our minds their various faculties, than a particle of matter could speak itself into being, or, joining with others, could acquire spontaneously organic formation. God was disposed to create a people for himself, to raise a generation on whom he might bestow eternal felicity; and, therefore, behold him attempering the dull clay, modelling the lamp of humanity, and taking a living coal from the altar of his self-existent fire to light it withal! "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me; I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well: my substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret; thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

And then, as to *preservation*, — the mercy of being kept day by day, and moment by moment; — what is this but a continual creation? Yes, just as without the centripetal and centrifugal forces impressed on and continued to the heavenly bodies, only by the *divine volition*, universal nature would be disorganized,

so without the constant care, the tender assiduity of our GOD, this *continual remodelling*, so to speak, our frames, we should once again seek our nothingness; "there would be but a step between us and death." Hear, therefore, the Prophet instructing us: "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting GOD, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Attend to the inspired David, addressing him as the "Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth," and in gratefully adoring strains acknowledging him as "about his path, and about his bed, and spying out all his ways."

But in these things, we do but begin to trace the mercy of our heavenly Father; "Lo! these are parts of his ways, but how small a portion is heard of him!" Had it been the design of the ALMIGHTY to create and preserve us, still, how, by a different economy, without our having the least power to alter the arrangement, might he have made life a weary burden; and especially, as sinners, what reason might there have seemed for his doing so? He might, as Dr. Paley says, "have formed our senses to be as many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment; or have placed us amidst objects so ill suited to our perceptions, as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every scent, distressing; and every sound, a discord." How, then, does the benevolence of GOD shine forth in the present distribution of his providence; how is man, even sinful man, taught, that "He is good, and doeth good continually." Even the most afflicted, (if his mental vision be not dimmed by sin,) must perceive the goodness, as well as the wisdom of our heavenly Father's arrangements, and confess that the ALMIGHTY's dealings with him are different indeed from his deserts. But as to the majority of the human family, or, as to any individual, if the *whole* of his life (and not especial passages of sorrow) be considered, how certainly have mercies exceeded griefs, or at least, how much must we trace it to our own fault

or folly if our experience be otherwise. Our year of mortality may have its clouds and rains, its snows and winds, but we are seated in a propitious clime, in which bright suns and unclouded skies are far more numerous, and the very storms we mourn, though they cause a temporary gloom, do but instruct us in thankfulness, and mingle fruitfulness with weeping.

But the things which have been spoken, attach to the less happy children of our race; I am addressing the recipients of many privileges, — distinguishing blessings; those who, with respect to this life merely, are among the most favored of the inhabitants of the earth; who glory in the dear name of freedom; who enjoy quietness and prosperity; who, in looking back upon the year that is past, may take up the language of our psalm and say, "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it; thou preparest the corn; thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou blessest the springing thereof: thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness; they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." Nay, brethren, you live to tell of a judgment of the Lord, which has visited land after land, and has probably destroyed a greater number of human beings than any other visitation ever known, not excepting the flood. Oh! what an awful period has the last summer been for thousands! How has the king of terrors passed along among us! How has the destroying angel struck with his sword, now one, and now another of our fellow-mortals! How has the grave yawned, and hades been peopled! What a voice of preparation has sounded in our ears! What an uncertainty has attended our path as to who should be the next affected! Our life has hung in doubt from day to day. Fear has been our familiar. The word in every mouth, the thought in every heart was the same; "Shall I be taken!" We have stood by the beds of the sick, we have heard the moans of the dying, we have seen the painful haste with which our fellow-pilgrims have been removed to their final home; we have felt

that security was not either in staying or in flight! For as in the battle the swift shot attains equally the sturdy warrior in his rank, and the fugitive courting dishonorable safety, so, in this battle of the LORD, the arrow has pierced those who have departed as well as those who have remained: it has found its way to the recesses of the wilderness, and to the crowded streets of the city; to the mansion of the wealthy no less than to the hovel of the lowliest! Nay, am I not addressing some whose friends have thus fallen asleep? Are there not those before me who have themselves, though not fatally, been wounded? And yet are *we* spared! Yet do *we* survive through the mercy of our GOD! Yet are *we* experiencing a return of wonted peace, and *hear* only the tempest, as, having swept by our homes, it is desolating places beyond us. Surely it becomes us to recognise this signal blessing of the ALMIGHTY, and, pondering on our change of feelings in the short period of a few months, to consider the salutary lessons to be derived from the afflictive providence.

But what has been said pertains alone to the mercies received in the present life, upon which even (in their extent and excellency) I feel I have scarcely touched, and must leave it to your own hearts to complete the meditation. But all these, be it remembered, are but *means*, they are not *final* blessings: they are not the *objects*, properly speaking, of GOD's dealings with man: they are, as it were, but so many steps of pearl, and beryl, and amethyst, and topaz, leading to the brilliant throne of salvation; the ineffable glory and dignity to which our Almighty Parent would exalt his children. Yes, brethren, temporal blessings are *excellent*, they evidence their origin; they are *extensive;* "there is neither speech nor language where their voice is not heard!" but they are as nothing compared with those riches of grace, that perfection of happiness, which GOD has reserved for returning sinners, and which he offers to them in the incarnation of his Son, and the fellowship of his Spirit. You may breathe the gales of spring, but the spring passes. You may bask in the fostering sun, but the sun descends: you may pluck earth's most delicious fruits, but their bloom is soon lost, their taste corrupted. "The world passeth away, and the things thereof, but *salvation*

abideth for ever." The only change it experiences is an augmentation of unutterable bliss. It is well for us to take our range over temporal mercies, it is well to soar aloft on the wings of meditation, that we may behold more and more the prospects of earth's comforts, and the exuberance of GOD's benevolence; but, would we seek security as well as pleasure; would we contemplate the fulness of joy as well as the streams of goodness, we must betake ourselves to the rock CHRIST, rising amid the unfathomable surge of infinitude; we must make the Saviour's bosom our home; the truths of eternity our repose; and, therefore, did the devout of Israel employ the elevated language of the text, and hence, with them, are we invited to observe in the second place —

II. The effect these things should produce in our minds.

The bands of worshippers, as they approach the holy city, are impressed with the twofold thought of the festival of thankfulness to be held there, and the duty of attending to desires and promises of obedience previously formed. They wish, if complaint and sorrow are to be forgotten in praise, that at least the vows of affliction should be performed in prosperity. They solicit the condescending regard of GOD to their grateful homage, "Praise waiteth," or as the margin from the original reads, "is silent for thee, O GOD in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed!" Thankfulness is a distinctive mark and prominent duty of the servant of GOD: it is a holy and blessed state of mind, of which the world knows little, for the object of the unregenerate man's idolatry is *self*, and like a Narcissus, in admiring he perishes. Not so the inhabitants of that place of which Sion is a type. Heaven is all praise. The burden of the song of angels is, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto GOD for ever and ever." Not so the Church of redeemed sinners, who have, if possible, even higher motives for gratitude. Brethren, you are now invited to participate in this feeling. You have heard some few of the mercies of GOD (though briefly and feebly, indeed,) enumerated. Each, in his personal experience of GOD's loving kindness, has his *personal* motives for praise.

I do not urge you to this as a thing exacted: I invite you to meditate on the gentleness, the forbearance, the parental sympathy of God toward you: I invite you merely to withdraw your minds from wrong impressions of the divine government and your deserts: I call you to consider the blessings laid up for you, and of which those already received are but as the shadow: I beseech you to contemplate God as "opening his hands and filling all things living with plenteousness;" and then to go on, and looking upon the effects of enmity with the source of joy in eternity, to remember He has proposed a way of peace and glory through his dear Son; and then, I ask no more; I am satisfied you cannot be ungrateful; I am persuaded you must love your God; I am sure that nothing but the most deluded, as well as sinful state of mind, can keep you back from him. "Praise *now* waiteth for God in Zion!" Add then your voices, your hearts, to the blessed employment. Practise now that strain in which, if Christians, it will be your part to assist hereafter.

But I err in this exhortation. You find rather your thoughts too deep for utterance; language cannot depict the bursting emotion of your hearts: you feel, you know not how to thank aright *Him* to whom you owe all that you have, and all that you are for time and eternity. Let the text still comfort you. It teaches, "Praise is *silent* for thee, O God, in Zion." If you cannot describe, you can adore. If you find it impossible to give utterance to your feelings, you can at least, with the early Church, yea, with the worshippers before the throne, bow in devoutest meditation, —

"Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise."*

Still, brethren, though you do not speak, there is a way of evincing your gratitude. The stars in their course are silent, "yet is their voice gone into all the world, and their sound to the ends of the earth." There is a language more forcible than

* A celebrated historian of antiquity observes, — "Parvi affectus loquuntur, magni tacent." — "Small affections speak, great are silent."

that of words: this the text suggests. It is obedience. Yes, it is the recalling the thoughts of our affliction, the perfecting the desires of moments in which, as we walked along the shore of eternity, our minds were more impressed with its vastness and profundity, and the consequent necessity of living to CHRIST. "Unto thee shall the vow be performed!" Brethren, there is no greater guilt than that of a broken vow! You may not, indeed, have made distinct engagements of this kind with GOD; (though it is probable that some, during their lives, have done this;) at all events, by Baptism, most, and by Confirmation and the Lord's Supper, many of you are under solemn promises to the ALMIGHTY, and may say with David, "Thy vows are upon me, O GOD!"

Have you then broken these vows by sin? Alas! who almost has not! Have you thought and lived differently from what you intended when affliction was your monitress? "Let the time past suffice to have wrought" such wickedness. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of GOD;" confess your guilt; approach as suppliants his mercy-seat: make the Saviour your friend: entreat for the aid of the renewing Spirit: be not satisfied without a return of the holy, tender affections of your first dedication to the LORD. Ask yourselves, "Where is the blessedness we once enjoyed?" Perform now your vows: let this day be the beginning of a new life to you; a life of prayer, and praise, and fidelity; a life of preparation for eternity; a life of holy accordance with your privileges and your mercies. "The LORD waiteth to be gracious" to the returning sinner. "He will bless you with his favor and the light of his countenance, and you shall go on your way rejoicing."

[The following sermon, prepared for a special occasion, is selected for publication in the "Pulpit" at the request of a friend, and not from any partiality of the author.]

ADMONITION TO THE YOUNG:

A Sermon,

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1 John ii. 13. — "*I write unto you, young men.*"

The preacher, whether inspired or uninspired, must always feel a great degree of solicitude for the young. That this was the case in the days of inspiration, the whole volume of God's word abundantly testifies; and we daily witness more than sufficient to convince us, that this solicitude has not diminished in any subsequent period of the world. The spiritual welfare of the young is still an object near to the preacher's heart: and though he may often address them, and again and again renew his theme, he never finds the subject exhausted, nor less deserving of deep and devout consideration. To-day, I again write unto you, young men, of the things which belong to your eternal peace.

But before I proceed in language of my own, let me turn back to the teachings of a preacher, who, in addition to the rich endowments of human wisdom, possessed also the gift of inspiration. This preacher was Solomon: and it is not too much to say, that in endeavoring to impress his solemn admonitions upon the minds of the young, he adverts to some of the most awakening considerations that are to be found in the whole compass of divine revelation. After speaking of the vanity of earthly things, and of the evils attendant upon the decay of the natural powers, and the decrepitude of old age, he treats of the awful realities of death and a future judgment, in terms of great force and striking sublimity. But let us attend to his language: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil

days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them: while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened." And here he adds a variety of impressive images, descriptive of the declension of the bodily strength, and the decay of the organs of sense; and then subjoins the several considerations which are designed to give effect to the admonition already delivered. "Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern: then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." And, finally, he thus sums up his solemn admonition: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccles. xii.)

Such is the teaching of Solomon. Such is the manner in which the inspired preacher writes to you, young men, of the weighty concerns of time and eternity. And, surely, a better model cannot be found in the sacred volume for our present lessons of instruction. In writing to you, at this time, what admonition can be more seasonable than that which the wise man enforces by so many momentous considerations? An early devotion to the service of God, is the duty to be enjoined upon you. And the first consideration that presents itself in favor of this early devotion, is, that it secures your immediate and lasting happiness. It is not sufficient to say, that to *remember*, or, in other language, to *obey your Creator in the days of your youth*, is *one* of the sources of happiness; but we are bound to say, that it is the *only* source of happiness. If you would avoid the *evil days*, which always follow procrastination and delay, enter at once, on the first call of God, into his service. Take the earliest dawning of gospel light, the very first fruits of the morning, to obey and follow your Lord and Master. Delay not, until you have contracted evil and inveterate habits; until vice has spread contamination over your soul, and the example

of the world has gained a corrupt and baleful influence over your passions. There are evil days to come, when your vices will prove an irksome burden, and when the world will mock your calamities; and the years are drawing nigh in which you can find no pleasure, if this admonition has been disregarded, and the service of your God rejected.

But we have other considerations to set before you. Have you thought of the dangerous tendency of deferring the means of securing the enjoyments of time and the awards of eternity, under the delusive hope that other opportunities will be afforded, when you may find yourselves better prepared for the performance of this duty? If not, I admonish you at once to chase this traitorous hope from your bosom. Go with me, and read a contradiction of this flattering and false idea, in records which will not deceive you: — I mean, the records of death. Go with me and learn wisdom, where it is taught by mute but unerring monitors: — I mean, among the monuments which parental affection has erected to the memory of departed youth. Go with me, and stand by the side of the new-made grave; for even the silent grave will teach you a lesson of truth on this subject. Go with me to the school of experience: experience is a severe preceptor; but, nevertheless, a preceptor "that never palters with us in a double sense; that keeps the word of promise to the ear, and breaks it to our hope." Go with me, and inquire of the first fellow-traveller to eternity whom you meet, whether there can be any circumstance in the condition of man, to warrant procrastination and delay. All, all will answer with one voice, and experience will confirm the answer, that *now* is the time to remember your Creator; that now is the time to serve your divine Master; that now is the time to escape the evil days, and the years of wo that are drawing nigh.

But this consideration is frequently brought home to your bosoms in a manner more especially calculated to teach the danger of delay. In the mysterious dispensations of heaven, a voice speaks to you, young men, which you cannot disregard. Few are the months, or weeks, or days, that pass away without presenting cases to your observation which completely verify

the admonitions of the preacher. You stand around the open graves of the young. You hear the knell of departed youth. You are often called to the painful duty of committing to the earth the mortal remains of those who were young like yourselves, and whose hopes and prospects of long life were as promising as your own. To those who were your companions, the sun and the light are darkened: to them the return of the clouds and the seasons are no more known. They go to their long home, and the mourners go about the streets. The silver cord is loosed; the golden bowl is broken; the pitcher is broken at the fountain; the wheel is broken at the cistern. Their dust returns to the earth as it was; their spirits return unto God who gave them.

And here, a further consideration in favor of the early devotion of the heart to God, urges itself upon your attention. The return of the body to the ground, after the departure of the spirit, is but giving back *earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust:* but the return of the immortal spirit to the immediate presence of the eternal God who gave it, is an event of awful interest. The return of the spirit to God! a spirit that came from God pure and undefiled. And in what state shall it return? Contaminated by guilt? stained and polluted by unrepented sins? unwashed by the atoning blood of the Lamb? unsanctified by his blessed Spirit? unfit to remain in his awful presence, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? These are questions of deep and solemn import; and bring into immediate view the last consideration by which the admonition of the preacher is enforced: the awards of eternity; the great and final question of life or death: *for* God *will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

These, then, are the momentous considerations by which the inspired preacher urges upon your attention the necessity of devoting the spring-time of your life to the service of God, and of making an early preparation for the great events of the last day.

But do you ask, young men, why I thus write unto you *now?* and why the admonition before us may, at this time, be con-

sidered as particularly seasonable? I answer, because it has pleased God, in the course of his wise and righteous providence, to bring before you, with more than ordinary frequency, those afflicting cases which tend, beyond all others, to give force and effect to admonitions of this nature.* Of the peculiar severity of these dispensations, it is not my present purpose to speak. Such cases are always deeply afflicting, and must necessarily excite your sympathy; and I should doubtless find myself unable to suggest an idea on the subject, in which your own feelings would not anticipate me. A youthful victim of disease is always an affecting spectacle. An early death-bed opens so many wounds in the bosoms of near and dear relatives, that we are unavoidably moved to weep with those who weep. But still, if we can indulge the consoling hope, that those who are gone have departed in the true faith of the Gospel, and are now resting in the arms of Jesus, we find our feelings soothed and our sinking spirits sustained: and instead of indulging in immoderate grief, we should rather derive comfort from the idea, that the great penalty is paid; and that those whom we loved have been permitted to enter the Church triumphant above, without enduring the trials and struggles attendant on a long and protracted warfare in the Church militant below. It is proper, however, to advert to cases of this kind, as I have already intimated, for the purpose of giving the more point and effect to our admonitions: and viewed in this light, my young hearers, the recent instances of mortality among you unavoidably force themselves upon your attention, and become peculiarly interesting and instructing. If the exhortation of the inspired preacher — *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth* — has hitherto passed by you unheeded; and if it be not now sufficient to persuade you to bring your youthful hearts a willing sacrifice to God; can you equally disregard the admonition furnished in these affecting cases? Shall the lessons conveyed in these dispensations also prove insufficient to persuade you to turn unto God, *now, while*

* This allusion is sufficiently explained in the subsequent pages.

the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them?

You will reflect, that among those whose departure we lament, there were some who, but a few days since, stood side by side with you as companions and friends; and that they were then, as you are now, looking forward to the enjoyment of life and its various comforts. There probably was a time, when the thoughts of eternity seldom occupied their minds. The world appeared decked out in its thousand deceitful charms. In prospect, at least, every thing was bright and flattering; and, for a time, their hopes were fixed on earthly objects. But you know the sad reverse. Withering disease, and decay, and death, followed close upon these delusive scenes; and your young companions have been summoned away to the eternal world. You have seen the earth close upon their remains. *The dust has returned to the earth as it was. They have gone to their long home, and the mourners go about the streets.* While, therefore, you sympathize with the bereaved, and while you fondly cherish the hope, that the sanctified spirits of the departed *have returned to* God *who gave them*, and now rest in the bosom of redeeming love, turn again, for one moment, to the instructive lesson conveyed in these dispensations.

Young men — you may still cherish in your memory the friends who are gone; but you meet no more in this world. How soon you may meet in another, it is not for mortals to know. A few years, at most, perhaps but a few days, or a few hours, may be the whole term of your separation. You probably now feel secure in the freshness and vigor of youth; but you know not how soon this freshness may be withered, and this vigor prostrated, by the touch of dissolution. You doubtless anticipate the enjoyment of life for many years; but you know not how soon the anticipation may be defeated. Perhaps you think not, as seriously as you ought, of eternity; but you know not how soon its awful concerns may force themselves, with tremendous energy, upon your mind. The world appears charming and inviting to you; but even now the years may be drawing nigh when darkness shall overshadow it. Your pros-

pects are bright; but you know not how soon disappointment may blast them. Your hopes are fixed on things below; but how soon may experience teach you the fallacy of these hopes, and constrain you to say, *I have no pleasure in them!*

Consider, youthful hearer, by what frail ties you are bound to earth; how easily the silver cord of life is loosed; the golden bowl broken; the pitcher broken at the fountain; and the wheel broken at the cistern. Consider how liable this perishing dust is, at any moment, to return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to return unto GOD who gave it. Consider all this, and then ask yourself whether you do well to remain careless, secure, and indifferent to the concerns of eternity. Ask yourself whether it is right, whether it is safe, to sport, with blind temerity, upon the very brink of a fearful precipice. Ask yourself whether it is not the part of wisdom and of prudence, as well as of duty, *to remember your Creator now, in the days of your youth.* And as you reflect on the case of those who have departed in the true faith of the Gospel, and who have appeared calm and serene amid the most trying and distressing scenes, let every such reflection prompt you to the anxious inquiry, whether your trust in GOD is sufficient to enable you to follow their bright example, were you now called to face the terrors of death. And as you pursue this inquiry, bear in mind the awakening truth, that your great and last enemy does not always approach his victim with slow and gradual steps. In such an hour as we think not, at a moment of entire self-security, does the summons sometimes come. It is a summons, against which no human fortitude can arm us; a summons which the power of religion alone can enable us to meet with composure.

May you, then, my young friends, and may we all, use our utmost diligence to have all things in readiness when the summons does come. May we now, while it is called to-day, secure the strong foundation of our present hope, and of our future bliss. May the dispensations to which we have briefly adverted, prove instrumental in the hand of GOD, in awakening our attention to the solemn admonitions which we have drawn from the sacred volume. "And may the good examples of our

departed friends, and the hope of their eternal blessedness, excite us to press, with the more earnestness, toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. In every instance of mortality, may we see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and may we learn so to number our days as to apply ourselves unto wisdom; that so, among the changes and vicissitudes of the world, our hearts may be fixed on that sure and only foundation, where true joys are to be found." And when we reflect, *that* GOD *will surely bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* "let us learn to live above the world, to seek the favor of our heavenly Father, to study his holy will, to observe his laws and precepts, and in all our actions, to aim at his glory, the salvation of our own souls, and the souls of our fellow-mortals; that so, when we go to our long home, his presence may go with us, to sustain and comfort us, to lead us to the rest eternal in the heavens!"

ADMONITION TO THE YOUNG.

How prone is man, in youth's enchanting hour,
To speculate upon the glitt'ring sands of time;
Life's threescore years and ten, like April shower,
May not be his, deferring things sublime.

Does health give promise of a safer bloom
When manhood crowns his short, precarious state?
There 's but a step between him and the tomb:
And oh! what *ruin* to procrastinate!

What if you gain this world's dear bought applause,
And live enroll'd amongst her sons of fame;
A rigid votary to fashion's laws,
Lighting the torch at folly's glaring flame?

What if you hold from fortune's flattering smile,
All that her flowery lap displays for thee,
Become a sharer of her gifts awhile,
And lull thy cares in dreams of vanity?

What if you stand unrivall'd in your day,
And move within the higher spheres of life;
Hourly beguiling time's sure steps away,
Secure from labor, poverty, and strife;
When death unheeded comes! 't will mar the whole,
What profit then, sweet youth, to "*lose your soul?*"

Turn, turn to CHRIST; be teachable and mild,
Dependent on his providential care:
You 'll then be JESUS' blest and chosen child,
Eternal glory in his presence share:
Then with your anchor fix'd on JESUS' love,
Your soul shall harbor safe in realms above.

MANY have long been of the opinion, and still *feel*, and express the *decidedly* erroneous sentiment, that the religious views and principles of the venerated and deceased Bishop Hobart were of a *cold* and *formal* character, and that he assumed that "an entire change of the natural heart of man was not necessary to his salvation."

It is our purpose to do away such error, and that "the memory of the just be blest," we give his own language on that *vital* and truly-important subject.

BISHOP HOBART
ON
MAN'S NATURAL DEPRAVITY, AND THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH.

[*Extracted from his Posthumous Works.*]

"In his general character, man must be born again, must undergo a spiritual change, as a fallen and corrupt creature."

"Blind to spiritual truth, and incapable of spiritual good, except as he is enlightened and sanctified by the DIVINE SPIRIT, it is

apparent that fallen and corrupt man requires the renewing agency of this divine Guide and Sanctifier. On account, then, of the misdirection and abuse of his powers and propensities, his state by nature, independently of divine grace, is characterized as a state of blindness, impotency and sin. 'The natural man discerneth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD.' 'The carnal mind is enmity against GOD.' 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.' This is the language of Scripture. What is the language of fact? Who are they that understand and relish the sublime and holy truths of the Gospel? Who are they that exhibit a uniform and consistent course of piety and virtue? Who are they that not only 'do justly and love mercy, but walk humbly with their GOD' — revering and loving his attributes, serving him in righteousness and holiness, submitting to his institutions and ordinances? Are there any who thus merit the character of holy and righteous men — none but those who, in humility and sincerity, have invoked, and in the use of the prescribed means, have received the enlightening and sanctifying influence of the DIVINE SPIRIT? Fact, then, as well as Scripture, enforces the necessity of a spiritual change in man, as a fallen and corrupt being."

"Self-love may attempt to blind and to flatter thee; and yet, successful as may be her efforts, she cannot conceal from thee the lamentable fact, that, under the guidance, and with the efforts of thy own reason and strength, thou art in a greater or less degree, under the dominion of corrupt passion, and far, very far from those holy attainments that mark the righteous man. What, then, should be the conclusion? That thy corrupt nature must be purified by a power superior to thine own, — by that agency which in mercy GOD has provided for the sanctification of his fallen creatures — the renewing of the HOLY GHOST. — 'Thou must be born again.'"